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SUBJ: HONG KONG SAREX 96 UPDATE

SUMMARY: The Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (CAD) has conducted an annual SAREX for the past twenty years. The exercise involves **joint U.S. and multinational participation** to practice and observe peacetime Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Hong Kong region. The U.S. has participated in the exercise at various levels since 1976. **PACAF is our Executive Agent.** Hong Kong SAREX 96 took place from 2-5 December 96. The future of the exercise beyond the 1 JUL 97 reversion is unknown.

KEY POINTS:

- *This exercise is with Hong Kong not the People's Republic of China (PRC)
- *PACOM has no exercises with the PRC
- *Hong Kong SAREX could be a catalyst for starting a U.S./China exercise program
- *PACOM should negotiate continuance of the exercise with the PRC

DISCUSSION:

- * Hong Kong SAREX 96 objectives:
 - ** Improve multilateral SAR coordination in WESTPAC
 - ** Exchange peacetime SAR procedures/techniques with multinational SAR forces
 - ** Provide presence during Hong Kong reversion to PRC control
- * U.S Force participation:
 - **PACAF - 1 HC-130 and an element from the Pacific Rescue Coordination Center (RCC)
 - **PACFLT - 1 P-3 aircraft and an element from the Joint RCC
 - **USCG - USCG Cutter the Morgenthau and 1 HH-65
 - **Total U.S. force participation is approximately 215 personnel
 - **RADM Collins, CDR, 14th Coast Guard District, HI was the senior U.S. representative
- * Multinational participation:
 - **Hong Kong CAD and various other Hong Kong Agencies
 - **Observers included 36 from the PRC, 7 from Vietnam, 2 from Brunei, 2 from Thailand and 2 from Macau
- * The exercise involves a variety of SAR operations that include:
 - **A short range water rescue demonstration
 - **Long range search exercise involving the simulated ditching of an aircraft up to 100 miles off shore
 - **Demonstration of the Coast Guard computer aided search planning program
 - **Symposium on international SAR topics
- * The PRC has observed or participated in several past Hong Kong SAREX exercises

BOTTOM LINE: Continuing Hong Kong SAREX provides the potential for possible future exercises with the PRC. **PACOM should negotiate** the continuance of the exercise after the reversion of Hong Kong to the PRC on 1 July 97.

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